

Building the Ontario Beef Brand



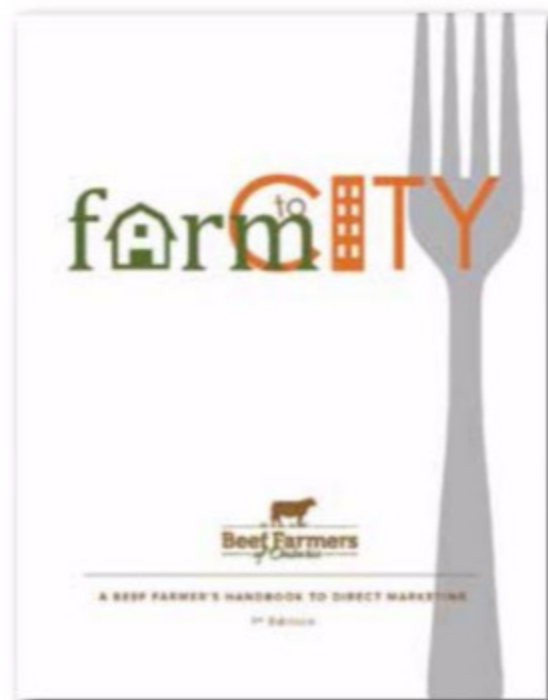
2017 will mark an exciting year for the Beef Farmers of Ontario (BFO) as the organization makes a significant shift in the role they play in the development and implementation of regional marketing initiatives throughout Ontario.

Demand is strong for Ontario beef in the province. We have the largest consumer market in the country and there is great opportunity here for growth. To develop these opportunities, BFO has established a progressive three-year Regional Marketing Initiative (RMI) to provide direct benefits to Ontario beef farmers through their current check-off investment. The RMI includes strong linkages to industry partners, government agencies and the beef processing sector in Ontario. As BFO knows, a strong processing sector is vital to Ontario beef farmers and a critical link to creating demand pull for Ontario beef from the farm gate through to the consumer. In the past, through BFO support, several Ontario beef brands such as the Ontario Corn Fed Beef program have been successful in generating recognized value and recognition in the Ontario market. Through this initiative, BFO can build on these models of success and provide the stimulus for sustainable growth in the Ontario beef industry.

Within the strategy, BFO has laid out a clear plan to focus efforts on three important objectives: increase market penetration for Ontario beef brands; maximize value of Ontario beef products; and enhance consumer confidence in the Ontario beef industry.

Work through the RMI has already begun. A curriculum-based resource for culinary institutions across the province is under development, as well as a Collaborative Partnership Program where producer groups, processors and organizations, in partnership with BFO, can access cost-share funding for marketing related projects. To find out more about BFO's Regional Marketing Initiative, visit www.ontariobeef.com.

Another great initiative that correlates strongly with the RMI is the Farm to City model that BFO continues to promote with its members. With the growing market demand in Ontario for locally-produced food, BFO with funding support through Growing Forward 2, has developed a direct-to-consumer business model, coined the Farm to City project, for beef farmers looking to conveniently connect with urban consumers in search of locally-sourced protein.



To bridge the gap between farmers, processors and urban customers, the model allows consumers to place orders and pay for local beef products in advance through a secure website (created and supported by BIO) and the farmer maintains a regular scheduled drop site location where the consumer can pick up their order. A major benefit of this business model for the farmer is the ability to plan production and create time saving efficiencies. With a pre-order system, the farmer will know in advance what cuts and quantity to prepare, package and deliver, including profit details. For the consumer, the model provides a convenient way to source local beef products and it provides an opportunity for meaningful dialogue and feedback with the farmer.

To help farmers decide if the Farm to City model might be a fit for their farm businesses, BFO has developed a handbook to provide an outline of the model, the capabilities of the online store, a case study, and important considerations such as transportation and storage requirements, the importance of processor relationships, production planning and insurance.

Lastly, BFO continues to reach out to Ontario consumers who are looking to learn more about what happens on beef farms with its Worried About...



series. These brochures highlight and discuss the different issues that many consumers are concerned and interested about. Ranging from what cattle eat and animal care to greenhouse gases and hormone use, these brochures provide a wealth of knowledge in an easy to understand, positive format. Connecting with the consumer and providing them with the knowledge of how Ontario beef is produced is an important part of the industry and these brochures are a key tool in helping to accomplish this. ■

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Slow Cooker Green Curry Beef

Makes 6 servings.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ lb (750 g) boneless cubed Ontario stewing beef
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) prepared Thai green curry paste
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) rice wine vinegar
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) fish sauce
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) brown sugar
- 1 whole star anise
- 1 ½ cups (375 mL) coconut milk
- ½ lb (250 g) snow peas
- 2 cups (500 mL) uncooked basmati rice
- ½ tsp (2 mL) canola oil
- salt, to taste
- ¼ cup (50 mL) toasted sliced almonds (optional), for garnish
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) chopped fresh cilantro (optional), for garnish

Prep Time: 10 minutes • Cook Time: 9 hours

In a 5-quart slow cooker toss together the beef, onion, garlic, green curry paste, rice wine vinegar, fish sauce, brown sugar, star anise and coconut milk.

Set slow cooker setting to low and let the curry cook for 8 hours 30 minutes.

Carefully uncover, remove star anise and stir in snow peas. Cover and cook for 25 minutes more.

Meanwhile, prepare rice. Bring a pot filled with 3 ½ cups (825 mL) of water to a boil. Stir in rice, canola oil and pinch of salt. Cover, reduce to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes or until water is absorbed. Remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork.

To serve, divide rice and curry between bowls. If desired, garnish with fresh cilantro and almonds.

